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PROGRAM:

THE TODAY SHOW

DATE:

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STATION OR NETWORK:

NBC-TV

TIME:

7:00 A.M.

MR. ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, GUEST

HUGH DOWNS: As we mentioned earlier, there will be many memoirs, stretching on in the years to come, of the Kennedy years, but it's quite likely that none will surpass in excellence one that is done -- just now available -- "A Thousand Days," written by Arthur M. Schlesinger. This is not only exciting reading, it's the best way to get history by a man who has worn both hats, really. He's been in almost a unique position of being a historian, but also as special presidential assistant, having the rare opportunity to participate in the actions of government, at the same time looking at them as a historian.

This "Thousand Days" has already stirred up Washington somewhat because there have been things like some politicians have complained that it's indiscreet to write about men who are still performing their duties of government. We want to start in welcoming Mr. Schlesinger to the program by asking about your comments about President Kennedy's plans regarding Secretary of State Rusk, for his second term, had he lived to serve a second term. Some people have said that this might have a damaging effect on Mr. Rusk's ability to perform his duties. How do you feel about this?

SCHLESINGER: I don't think it has, or need have -- indeed when the matter first came up, when fragments of the book were put in a magazine, the text of the piece, including the statement about Secretary Rusk arrived on my desk on the very day that President Johnson gave a press conference, in which he stated his indestructable confidence in Secretary Rusk, who he said was the head of the Cabinet and sat on his right hand, and so on.

It seemed to me then that so far as the effectiveness of Secretary Rusk was concerned, obviously if he had the total confidence of the present President, any disappointment felt by a previous president in him would no longer be relevant. But I